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LECTURES AND SERMONS

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LIFE'S HANDICAPS

"Now Naaman was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper." 2 Kings 5:1.

Hardly any chapter in the Book of the Kings is more arresting than the story of Naaman. He was a rough warrior in an antique age, but he may teach us that a man can do his work in the world, even a great work, despite a terrible handicap. Smitten with the white leprosy—a slowly developing malady, ending in utter absence of feeling—which wrought its horror under the skin and did not require exclusion from society, he not only served his king in high office, but saved his country in a critical hour. But alas, the story of his healing too often obscures the fine heroism of the man.

Here was courage of the first order, all the more noble because it was not born of hope. "While there is life there is hope," was a maxim that did not apply in his case; for he knew that, humanly speaking, the further his path stretched into the future, the harder it would become. If a man was ever justified in giving way to self-pity, or indulging in the luxury of despair, surely he was the man. Instead, he faced the hard fact as it was, went to his task carrying the weight of a dead hope, and did not only his duty but a noble work in his day. This lesson is for us—that we may learn to make the best of a hard lot, and not let it make the worst of us. Nor is there any lesson which we need more to take to heart, if so be that we may attain to wisdom.

If we go past the shell of the story to its kernel, we find that Naaman, so far from being exceptional, was really a typical man. His handicap was unusual only as to its form, not as to its fact. Every man has a handicap of some sort, except perhaps the egotist, whose handicap is so obvious that it need not be mentioned. As has been well said, if all

pain left its mark on the forehead; if, like the leprosy of Naaman, it could be seen at once, there would be an end of envy among men. No man in Damascus envied Naaman his popularity and success. There was the position and the power and the fame—and the leprosy. So it is with the man who is the most envied by his fellows, and with whom many would fain change places. He has his satisfactions and joys which all men see, but he has also his hidden sorrows, his unknown bafflements, and his secret martyrdoms. Could we but realize this, envy would give place to sympathy, kindliness, and pity.

No one need be told that our mistakes in life are often sad handicaps. Our tendency is to account for them singly, giving a separate explanation for each separate mistake, in our effort to extenuate them. Outsiders trace our errors to one central flaw in our nature, to some weakness which our blunders betray when we are put to the test. Thus they have no difficulty in explaining them, and they witness them without surprise, knowing that they will be repeated until we heal or repair the primary defect. For the most part they are near the right, but it is not always so. As a fact we are often mistaken about our mistakes, some of which turn out in the end to be the wisest things we ever did. Our mistakes, bad as some of them are, need not be our worst handicaps, unless we make them so by brooding too much over them.

Some handicaps inhere in the very conditions of our human life. The fact that we are caught in this mortal coil, doomed to wear a muddy vesture of decay, is itself a handicap to the ascending soul. Like Lorenzo, in "The Merchant of Venice," the heavy flesh dulls our ears and we do not hear the skyey melody. How insistent, in the lives of the saints, is the complaint,

which often becomes a plaint, that the body is a weight upon the spirit. Asceticism was an attempt, heroic but futile, to escape that handicap. However willing the spirit may be, the flesh is weak — sometimes pitifully, tragically weak. Even the Master was awearied as he sat by the well, and the disciples fell asleep in the Garden of Sorrow. Men like Newman and Emerson have, apparently, no struggle with physical passion, while other men are doomed to fight the beast day by day. What Browning wrote, in "Paracelsus," is true of our human lot as Augustine and Robert Burns knew it, and as many of us know it only two well. There is an inmost center in us all, where the soul abides, and

"Around, wall upon wall,
The gross flesh hems it in,
A baffling carnal mesh
Blinds it, and works error."

Then there are the inevitable limits of thought, of insight, of personality, beyond which we may not go. In high moments we seem to be on the point of stepping across those invisible lines, which move with us like the horizon; but the tide of inspiration ebbs, and the old barriers become painfully distinct. Not only philosophy and art, but friendship feels the handicap of this impalpable, but none the less impassable, wall which imprisons the soul. We speak of bearing the burdens of another, whereas we can hardly lift more than a splinter of his load, though we may shout words of good cheer to him in his loneliness. There is something appalling in the fact that man must live for fifty or seventy years alone with himself, and if for any reason that companionship is unhappy his life must be dreary and forlorn. Unless every resource of enlargement and enrichment is used, he will find himself a hermit in a bare hut. The longer one lives in this dark world, where each is a veiled mystery to his fellows, the more eager he is to seize every thread of love, every token of good will. All the saints assure us that there is a way whereby a man may be "never less alone than when alone," and happy is he who finds it.

Few realize the tyranny of temperament and mood. Reason as we will, our outlook upon life is largely, if not entirely, a matter of temperament. Subtly it tinges the soul, and most of all in those moments when the deeper forces of being play through the mind. Hardy and Meredith were friends and fellow dwellers in the house of life, but they lived in different rooms. From his window Hardy saw Egdon Heath at twilight, while Meredith from his room saw a sun-

lit scene. One who stands for an hour at the Hardy window will be glad to go to the Meredith room, where the sunlight pours in like a flood. Since we live in a palace there is no reason why we should sit down and stay in one room, least of all a dark room. As sons of the house let us enjoy the freedom of it, not forgetting the oratory in the dome with its lengthening vistas and lifting skies. No doubt temperament is imperious, but it can be modified to some extent.

As for moods, they defy analysis, and will not listen to reason, but seize and bind us without warning. They seem to be only wisps of feeling, yet they have a strange power and may so handicap us as to unfit us for our tasks. The only way to deal with dark and ugly moods is to knock them down and walk right over them on our way to the next duty. Otherwise they will fasten themselves upon us, and become fixed states of mind, fatal handicaps to all fruitful effort. There is no tyrant like a melancholy mood. Nor is there any friend quite like a lofty mood, which seems to give wings to the mind in its search after truth. How many precious things—visions, confidences, and joyous escapes—have been ours by virtue of gracious moods. Many an unforgettable Bible stanza—a pathetic half-light, or a glint of sunburst hope—is only a flitting mood caught and fixed in undying words. A magical mood, dross-drained and luminous, has more than once changed the whole life of a man, and made it new.

So far as our handicaps are due to environment, misfortune, or habits, they may be overcome. Even those awful calamities, of which one hardly dare speak, evoke in their victims powers of which they were not aware. Examples are abundant and thrilling. Symonds changed his retreat in the high Alps, whither he had fled for health, into a sanctuary of culture. Doom early rested upon Stevenson; but instead of sitting down to whine, he struck a note of lyric gaiety so heroic and compelling that it sent all men back to the fight. Who can imagine the emotions of a Matheson, a young man with a dream of scholarship smitten blind in the morning of life! Here was a handicap to baffle and appall the stoutest heart. Yet had it not been for that handicap perhaps his name would not now be known beyond a small circle. Shut off from the beauty of the world, his inner eye was unsealed, and his "Studies in the Portrait of Christ" is a classic. His great hymn, "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go," is an echo of his struggle, a cry of bereavement and a shout of victory.

Truly, the hard, unalterable thing may be faced and the victory won. A

cloud of witnesses testify that the sad inevitable is not the unconquerable, and that a man need not be happy in order to be useful; but that he is happy, when happy at all, because he is useful. These men, and others like them, who changed their weights into wings, show us that it takes more than blighted health, broken dreams and baffled hopes to ruin the life of a man. Even those — and such there are—whom fate has stripped bare, bereft and hedged about, as if to bar them from joy, need not give up. There are yet sources of usefulness and joy of which none but ourselves can rob us.

All of us, whether such has ever been our plight or not, will do well to learn the secret of Jane Farfrae, of whom Hardy tells us in one of his stories. He allows her a measure of happiness, despite his theory of the doubtful honor of a brief transit through a sorry world. He has to allow it, because she would have found it anyway. Her secret was that "of making limited opportunities endurable; which she deemed to consist in the cunning enlargement by a species of microscopic treatment, even to the magnitude of positive pleasure, of those minute forms of satisfaction that offer themselves to everybody not in positive pain; which thus handled have much the same inspiriting effect upon life as wider interests cursorily embraced." Ah, those words are worth their weight in gold. It was by that same secret that Charles Lamb overcame his frightful handicap, and left us his heroic legend. So also Cowper, whose mind was the victim of fits of insanity, and who wrote on the window of a mad-house the words of his sublime hymn —

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."

If this secret—almost too simple to be found out—helped a poor shattered soul to defy defeat, surely we may use it to our profit. No one need be told that these things are not easy to do. We know how the iron entered the soul of Thackeray and remained, when the mind of his wife fell into decay. He was never again really happy, but he did noble work to the end. Max Muller tells us that till his daughter died he had an endless delight in life, but when she vanished she took all the spring with her. Great and good men are bowed low by such bereavements, and some of them never rise. To chide them were blasphemy, but there is a way to overcome even the sad handicap which the death of those we love imposes upon us. Many things are worse than the death of one near to us, though

"Never morning wore to evening,
But some heart did break."

Far worse is it for a man to lose faith, and fail to recover it. One can bear anything so long as he has a firm hold upon spiritual reality; but when that becomes dim and dream-like he is left unanchored and adrift, at the mercy of every wind. He may lose faith in a dogma, and grasp a deeper and more satisfying confidence, but when the old creed does not give place to a larger and sweeter faith, he is of all men the most forlorn. Arthur Clough is an example of a man, highly gifted, whose wings were broken in this way, and never healed. It is pathetic to follow the path of his life and note how little came of his fine powers, which promised so much to the world, because he lost faith. Romanes was another who lost faith, though, happily, he found it again, and he has told us on a classic page what sufferings fall to the lot of a man who has love without faith. Men lose faith by carelessness and neglect of the culture of the soul, more often than by shock, and what they lose they may find.

But of all the handicaps in this mortal life sin is the most terrible. It poisons the springs of life, pollutes the fountains of character and of manhood, and defiles what is most hallowed upon earth. Yet this most awful handicap may be overcome by the grace and mercy of God. There is a river of God, flowing bank-full in the midst of the years, wherein if a man bathe as Naaman dipped in the river Jordan, the leprosy of sin—the black leprosy that eats away the higher life, the habit that entrails and stains, the lust that defiles—is washed clean, and the soul becomes as the soul of a little child, albeit stronger, sadder, and wiser. Here the evidence is so overwhelming that it bursts into song, and rises to the heights to victorious melody. The thing is simply true, and if a more blessed fact has ever floated into human ken, no man can name it.

For the rest, for those inevitable handicaps which no one can escape or overcome—the handicaps of the flesh, of the impassable limits of thought and personality—it is permitted us to hope that when at last we bathe in that other and darker river, of which Jordan has long been an emblem, we shall then be free of them—that the infinite pain that throbs forever in the heart of man shall be healed, and that the loneliness and longing that haunts all earthly music whatsoever, shall be heard no more. Yet, so much that is fine and beautiful has come of our being handicapped—all, indeed, that is of enduring worth and grace in our mortal life—that we may see, even while here in this mesh and coil of flesh, a hint of why it is so.

THE CHURCH

"Upon this rock I will build my church." Matt. 16:18.

By reason of the poverty of human language, we must often use the same word to describe different things. A school, for instance, is a given building, and it is also the teachers and pupils who meet within its walls. An Oxford college is a beautiful Gothic structure, mellowed by time and devoted to the pursuit of learning. The spires of Trinity lingered in the memory of Newman, and thirty years later he recalled the snap-dragon growing on the walls opposite his freshman rooms.

But an Oxford college is also a body of men, tutors, fellows, graduates, and undergraduates, united in a common corporate life. Often they are anything but ideal, torn by feuds, factions, bickerings, and jealousies. One reads the "Memoirs" of Mark Pattison and finds whole chapters given to a recital of the friction of college politics, and the grief he felt at failing to attain a coveted place. A feeling of bitterness stains his pages, and almost mars an otherwise admirable and valuable book. Above all feuds and factions rises another Oxford, a tradition of historic culture and refinement, an atmosphere to awaken, ennable and uplift, a procession of great minds — an invisible and intangible Oxford which makes the very buildings sacred. And it was to this Oxford that Arnold addressed his famous apostrophe:

"Adorable dreamer, whose heart has been so romantic! Who hast given thyself to ideas and to heroes not mine, only never to the Philistines! Home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names and impossible loyalties! Apparitions of a day, what is our puny warfare against the Philistines, compared with the warfare which this queen of romance has been waging against them for centuries, and will wage after we are gone."

In like manner the word church is used for three different things — for the building where prayer is wont to be made, for the worshippers who assemble, and for the historic communion of the seekers and finders of God. Such buildings are sacred because of the faiths, hopes and ideals to which they give shelter; holy because those who foregather there are in quest of holiness. Otherwise they are so much stone, and mortar, and timber. Time, the white god, makes all things holy, and what is old tends to become sac-

red. About an old church, where generation after generation have prayed, a certain beautiful sanctity seems to gather and grow, until it is easier to pray where so many have prayed before us. Hence the spell cast over us by the Temple of Faith, which "makes God eloquent among men." Even its bells, with their grave and kindly tones, evoke in us a kind of homesickness of the soul.

When we enter we find, as Matthew Arnold said, "a society for promoting goodness"; but a society made up of folk like ourselves, some better and some worse; and we learn that the church actual has the faults of our humanity. Often it has been torn by bitter feud, worldly ambition and unworldly envy; sometimes it has been an instrument of tyranny and obstruction, almost a scandal upon the earth. Yet, despite its errors and shortcomings, it is not only a necessity, because rooted in the deep need of man, but a center of benign and blessed influence. While I have no sympathy with the graceless foible of decrying the churches; there is much about institutional Christianity that dismays me, and if I needed evidence that the church is a human need and a divine creation, I would find it in the fact that it has survived its sectarianism and its ecclesiasticism. My experience has put me out of conceit with all forms of ecclesiastical organization, but it has taught me to believe more and more in the communion of all good men and women, whatever their sect, who love the Master and seek to follow Him. So much so, that I could wish that all ecclesiastical organizations were swept into oblivion, that the Spirit might incarnate itself in nobler and worthier forms; but, since this is impossible, and would be dangerous, let us, as the Greeks said, "make the second voyage," and see the ideal hovering above its poor realization.

Of course I speak only for myself, but frankly—remembering the word of Emerson as to the value of understatement—were it not for a vision of the ideal church, what Newman called "the communion of the saints," no pulpit could detain me another day. But if we keep that ideal in view, it will not only deliver us from impatience, but will reveal to us a hidden grandeur in the sorry actual, and inspire us with enthusiasm for the reality which it so feebly embodies. The actual is squalid enough, but the ideal is always "beautiful in the light of

holiness," a haunting and constraining vision. This is the true church, of which Jesus spoke in the words of the text—not any sect, hierarchy, or polity, but that community of good men and women whose minds are set on righteousness and peace, and which exists wherever two or three are gathered together in the name which is above every name; the "Congregation," to quote old Bishop Pearson, "of those faithful souls here on earth, who shall hereafter meet in heaven." Of that church we may say, as Arnold said of historic Oxford: "Apparitions of a day, what is our puny warfare against the powers of darkness, compared with the warfare which this queen of heaven has been waging against them for centuries, and will wage after we are gone!" And the gates of the unseen world shall not prevail against this church, beautiful as the morning and terrible as an army with banners.

Some power of imagination, some poetic insight, is needed to conceive of the church of the spirit, though the graphic parable of St. Paul of the body and its members helps to make it more real. It is the bride of Christ, her brow furrowed with thought, her eyes radiant with prophecy, her heart beating with love which renews itself eternally—a beautiful and mighty being having a life of her own, which is something more than the aggregate of the units of which it is made up. It is a vast fellowship of those who have found a like precious faith, a comradeship held together by a common experience of things immortal, a fraternity throbbing with the passion and prophecy of multitudinous life. Here are joined the devout souls of every age who have found God and rested in Him — the idealists with their insight, the saints with their vision, the poets, seers, and mystics of the universal church. A strange and varied fellowship they make, of many races, traditions, and creeds, held in the unity of the spirit, witnesses of the life of God in the souls of men.

They speak, each in his own tongue, but in a unison of language which is neither ancient nor modern, but timeless, eternal, one. Across the ages we hear Philo saying, "God hath breathed into man from heaven a portion of his own divinity." Years pass and St. Paul speaks, "Christ in us the hope of glory." Other years go by and Plotinus bears witness, "The wise man recognizes the good within him; this he develops by withdrawal into the holy place of the soul." Time marches, and Bernard of Clairvaux, administrator and saint, gives testimony, "It is in the spirit that union with God occurs." Still later Tauler preaches, "This revelation must take place in the spirit, for

God is spirit. Again, we hear Madame Guyon testify, confirming the word of Santa Teresa, "Accustom yourself to seek God in your heart, and you will find Him." So the witness runs through the ages, through Hus, Luther, Wesley, Fox, and Bushnell, as before it had come down through Augustine, St. Francis and Savonarola. Even across the beshadowed fields of philosophy there shone at times rays of white light, like rifts in the cloud. At last the voice of Emerson was heard speaking in our own land, "Within man is the soul of the holy, the wise silence, the universal beauty"; and Phillips Brooks, standing beside the pillar in Trinity church, sums it up:

"It is a blessed thing that in all times there have always been men to whom religion has not presented itself as a system of doctrine, but as an elemental life in which the soul of man came into very direct and close communion with the soul of God. It is the mystics of every age who have done most to blend the love of truth and the love of man within the love of God, and so to keep alive or restore a healthy tolerance."

Here is the true apostolic succession of the spiritual life, undisturbed by the transitions of theology or the conflict of sects, confident and forward-looking among the mysteries of life. It is authentic, not because of any hierarchy, but because it comes to us through a succession of apostolic souls. Otherwise it would be hardly more than a legend, though every church could boast an unbroken line of teachers whose heads had been blessed by the hands of the men before them. Just as the poet-laureates of England are made poets, when they are poets at all, not by edict of state, but by divine gift of genius, so the teachers of faith have power not by virtue of rank or office, but by experience of things eternal. Such experience, when illumined by great genius, places a man in the true hierarchy of the light-bringers and way-showers of the race. Whether it be Augustine or Edwards, St. Francis or Fenelon, Chalmers or Channing, the fact remains the same.

If it be asked, what, in this view, becomes of the idea of authority in religion, the answer is not far to seek. By its very nature authority in matters of faith and morals rests in God, and so far as it is entrusted to men, it is not official and arbitrary, but spiritual and persuasive. The Bible has an appealing authority, and may well be called infallible, though perhaps not in the sense in which that word is often used. But in the much deeper sense that, since it grew out

of a profound religious life, when rightly used it produces, infallibly, the kind of life out of which it grew. So also the church of whatever name. To me the Catholic church speaks with overwhelming authority, not through its hierarchy, nor through its pontiff, but through the voices of its saints, who are among my dearest teachers. Its thinkers must fight their way up in the arena of philosophy; but when Santa Theresa tells us of her life of prayer, we listen in a different mood, if so be that we may learn the path to the place of vision.

Nor can one join in the boast, so often made, as to fixity of dogma and faith, knowing, as Newman learned early in life, that growth is ever the sign of life—a principle he was afterwards to expand in a great essay. If the church is a living body, like all other living things, it must advance, unfold, and change. Fixity would be not a sign of life and power, but of sterility and death; an evidence not of stability, but of decay. Stability for a church, as for a planet, is in its motion. So Newman argued with rhythmic eloquence, and one need only turn to the history of his church to behold the truth of it. The truth is ever revealing new aspects of itself, and the truth that can move the heart must be a living, moving truth. As this sermon was suggested by our study of the life, genius and faith of Cardinal Newman—though with no polemical intent—we may also listen to his brother Francis, who held a different attitude. In a talk with James Martineau he once explained the difference between his religious position and that of his eminent brother, the cardinal. "It is a matter of faith," he said. "I have faith, and the cardinal has none. The cardinal comes to a river, and believes that he can not possibly cross it unless he takes a particular boat with a particular sign painted on it. I believe I can swim." And swim he did, as many others are doing, though surely there is no good reason why a man should swim alone when there are so many boats going in the same direction. Of course he was wrong in saying that the cardinal had no faith, and it must be true that the cardinal was wrong if he held that no other boat was able to cross the river.

Not even Cardinal Newman, with all his literary magic, has convinced me — his admiring reader — in this matter. With his doctrine of a visible, God-guided church I am in fullest accord; but where he was misled, as it seems to me, was not in identifying that church with the Catholic church, but in so far as he identified it with that church to the exclusion of all others. It is not my wish to

debate, not even to dispute, his position, but to state my own; which is, that wherever men foregather to worship in the name and spirit of Jesus, there is a part of His visible church. So that I see His visible church everywhere, in the plain chapel of Martineau not less than in the cathedral of St. Paul; in the tabernacle of Spurgeon and in that dream-temple at Milan; at St. Peter's at Rome, but also in the Quaker meeting house, without a spire, where I hear a sweet voice singing—

"All souls that struggle and aspire,
All hearts of prayer by Thee are
lit;
And, dim or clear, Thy tongues of
fire
On dusky tribes and centuries sit.
Nor bounds, nor creed Thou know'st;
Wide as our need, Thy favors fall.
The white wings of the Holy Ghost
Stoop, unseen, o'er the heads of
all."

One may thus be more catholic than the Catholic church herself—open of mind, hospitable of heart, and spiritually fraternal with all who love God and seek to do his will. Such a man belongs to all sects, and all sects belong to him, so far as they have any portion of Divine truth in their keeping, or any evidence of Divine grace in their work. All men, all books, all churches are his, whether Augustine or Athanasius, Dante or Milton, Butler or Bunyan, Francis or Luther, Martineau or Maurice, Newman or Emerson. He will be at home wherever men gather in the place of worship and lift up hands in prayer, at Rome or Moscow, not less than at Geneva, Canterbury or Edinburgh, or in the Quaker meeting house where Whittier and Woolman sat in silence awaiting the promptings of the spirit. He will not find it hard to keep a kind heart toward all his fellow-workers, though they speak a different dialect, assured that the methods of Grace are not less manifold than the methods of Nature and that God fulfills Himself in many ways.

Nor must the vision ever grow dim of a church greater than all our churches, whether Catholic or Protestant—the church of the Spirit founded upon a Rock, its spires sparkling in infinity, sheltering all devout and pure souls of whatever creed—the communion of the Saints and the fellowship of just men, exerting upon the rude way of the world a benign and redeeming influence, as Dean Church expounded with such golden eloquence in "The Gifts of Civilization"—the Home of the Soul, the house not made with hands eternal in the heavens and upon the earth.

THE PLACE OF HEARING

"Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it." Deut. 5:27.

If the Bible were not a living book no man or church could keep it alive. It lives because it reveals, in every form of literary art, the growth through long time of the life of God in the soul of man. While it is the mother in the literary family, about whose knee other books gather and grow, it remains always fresh and new, yet older and wiser than its children. Far more than a picture of ancient life, it portrays in history, parable, prophecy, proverb, poem, epistle and biography the eternal colloquy between God and man. As such it will hold its supreme and secure position among men while human nature is the same.

In this scene we have not only an incident in ancient story, but the picture of an abiding principle, a plea born of the eternal necessity of man, and therefore, eternal. It is the principle, often abused but still true, of the mediation of truth to man through man — one hearing for the many; a prophetic soul listening to the Divine Voice, and reporting its murmur to the waiting multitude. Nor is this principle rendered invalid by the fact that it has been invoked by every charlatan since time began, in his own selfish behalf. Instead, just because it survives so many gross abuses shows how deep it lies in the heart of man, and how eager he is, though often cruelly betrayed, to hear tidings of eternal things. Our race deserves high tribute for the persistence of its faith, despite the impositions of religious quacks and designing frauds; for

"Still at the prophet's feet
The nations sit."

How impressive is the picture of that far off scene. There stands the mountain, with its rugged crags — symbol of the high places of the Spirit, and the difficult way of ascent — in the midst of the plain. Clouds and darkness are round about its peak, with lightnings and reverberating thunders. Below is the human encampment, its white tents spread out like a temporary city, a pilgrim host waiting to hear the word of divine guidance, yet afraid to venture into the place of hearing. While they wait, a voice speaks from the midst of the clouds — symbol of the

voice of conscience which all men hear — uttering those ten words of moral command: honor thy father and thy mother; do not kill, do not defile the home, do not steal, do not swear falsely, do not covet. So terrible is that voice, echoed in the soul of each trembling mortal, that the people gather about their leader and say: "We cannot hear that voice and live, go thou near, and hear for us."

And the leader goes up into the place of shadows and thunders — a listener for his fellow men. Yet so fickle is the race of men, so forgetful of its need of guidance and the heroism of those who enter the awful chamber of hearing, that when the prophet comes down, his body worn with vigil and his face aglow with light, he finds, instead of a silent waiting host, eager to hear the truth, a people dancing about an image of a Golden Calf in revelry and feast. Some have denied that the Bible is a revelation of Divine nature, but surely no one can question that it is a perfect revelation of human nature. Here we see, as in a flashlight picture, the long sad history of the race, and the heart breaking tragedy of the prophets of every time. What mingled emotions of anger and despair must have been in the soul of Moses when he looked upon that scene of apostasy!

So it has been always, from that day down to our own year of grace. Through the ages one may trace, like a range of mountains, a line of lofty souls, whose biographies Carlyle held to be the true history of mankind; prophets, poets, seers — listeners in the Place of hearing. What agonies have been theirs, what tragedies of disappointment at the apathy of a race that follows its selfish aims always, and the ideal but fitfully; yet without those heroic souls, to whom the world was a whispering gallery, mankind would long ago have staggered back into savagery. For it is as true now as ever it was in the past that where there is no vision, no authentic interpreting voice, the people perish. One reads this ancient record with the feeling that it might have been written yesterday, so true is it to the facts of our age in which men are wont, as of old, to forget all else in the worship of the Golden Calf.

Nor is this principle of mediated truth confined to religion. Go where you will in our human world, and the same principle holds true. It is the

method of the higher life of man, which embraces the intellectual as well as the moral —all literary achievement, all artistic expression, all the beauty that lends glory to the mortal state. Poets, seers, and musicians do not fashion their messages out of their own vibrant souls; they hear for others "the choral harmony that is wherever God is." If asked as to the inner sources of their melody, with one accord they tell us that they are only listeners, reporting in the day what God has told them in the night. Handel did not invent the music of the "Messiah;" he heard it echoing in the upper air. "Tis we musicians know," said Browning; and they fulfill the saying of Jesus, which runs like a refrain through all his life and words—

"He that hath ears to hear,
Let him hear."

We live in an out-door age; but we forget that lonely, austere prophet of the lakes and hills, who lived aloof and aloft, meditating amid the scenes of nature until every hill became either a Sinai or an Olivet, every quiet stream a mirror of the uttermost heavens, and every bush aflame with God. To Wordsworth, more than to any other one influence, we owe the passion for nature which marks our era. He it was who entered that place of hearing and waited until he heard a motion and a Spirit that impells all living things, a hallowing Presence touching the meanest flower with thoughts too deep for tears; and having heard, he wrote in simple undying words his message to men. His poems are the sacred writings of a calm and profound faith that God is not only in his His heaven, but in His world. Men sneered at first and said it would not do, but now they go to the hills, as to a shrine, and find them a sanctuary of faith and beauty.

So also Lincoln—a man whose natural day recalls a prophet at the altar of state. When others were listening to the jangle and babel of the hour, he went into the quiet place—put his ear to his own heart, not to the ground—and heard the murmur of that voice which told him of liberty, justice, and mercy. For years he listened alone, until at last his words became so charged with power that they smote the hearts of men, and made even the careless hear. Nor could any pressure of public clamor turn him aside from the path in which "the better angels of his nature" told him to walk. So that, to this day, his words rise up before us and march in company with the prophetic words of the

far past. They are apart of the sacred script of our republic, because he dared to utter in the forum of the nation what had been told him in the secret place of hearing.

It is not the noises of the world that rack us, but its awful silence. This is an age of much speaking about many things, and too little thinking about anything. More than all else we need, both in church and state, great listeners—men who take time to go alone and think through, and to listen quietly in the place where wisdom gives audience. Never were there so many minds of the first order who cower, and cringe, and crawl before the whims of popular clamor, preferring to be swept along by the gusts of the hour rather than to stand four-square for what they know to be right. As if Moses had bowed down to the Golden Calf, along with the majority, unwilling to stand against the fanaticism of the hour. Yet no age ever recalled with more honor the heroic men of other days, perhaps because we have so few of like kind among us—just as in Kansas they are now erecting a memorial to a man who, amid a babel of angry voices, dared to stand firm and refuse to vote to impeach a president.

In a preface to a French version of the essays of Emerson, Maeterlink wrote, "There remains only the life of today, and yet we cannot live without greatness". Nor can we have greatness until men go into the place of hearing and listen to the voices that make men great. Complaint is made, now that Alexander McLaren has vanished, that we are suffering a dearth of great preachers. So far as it is true it is due to that fact that the men of the pulpit have no time to be listeners. Hurried, if not hurried, they are not permitted to enter the place of hearing, where they must often go if they are to have anything to say. As Mozley said of Newman and Keble, "they seemed to come forth from a different and holier sphere". So they did, and their words stirred men with strange longings for a different and holier life, because they had time to brood upon sacred things and kindle their message with coals from the altar. If the church would hear once more sweet-toned, melting voices in her temple, she must give her prophets time and quiet to listen.

How eagerly men wait to hear such a voice, and how quickly they detect and follow it. No matter in which temple it speaks, whether Catholic or Protestant, High church or Low church, thither they go to listen. There is an instinct in the

human heart that can always tell a voice from an echo, all the more so because it hears so many echoes when it longs for voices. When Newman stood in St. Mary's men felt in his very tones that he spoke as one who had been in the place of hearing. So also when Phillips Brooks climbed the stairs beside the old pillar in Trinity church—there was no mistaking the accent. Socrates was describing this note when he spoke of being, in his words, "moved by a Divine and spiritual influence." Still, as in the days agone, men say to their leaders, "Speak unto us all that God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it"—and though they so often stumble and fail in the doing of it, they are none the less eager to hear authentic tidings.

Not only the prophet, but all men can, and indeed must, go near to the place of hearing, if our faith is to be anything more than an echo. All may not hear alike, but each one who draws near and listens will understand the others, and out of seeming discord harmony will come—a unity of spirit in the bonds of peace. Those in sorrow will hear what those who are joyous do not hear, because their hearts are attuned to other keys. It may be that if all heard alike, no one would hear all. No one can hear all, but in a true sense no man can hear for himself without hearing for others. Nor can any man give to his fellows a higher or better thing—the thing they can never have unless he does give it—than the word of God spoken in his own heart. How wonderful is that passage in the "Journal" of John Woolman, in which he tells how he sought the place of hearing in be-

half of a young man, and heard the word that was needed.

If we are ever to hear we must learn to be quiet, and listen. The wisdom of all the saints is stated in those two lines of the great Newman poem—

"It is the very energy of thought
Which keeps thee from thy God."

We must silence every voice, said Fenelon, must silence ourselves also to hear in a profound stillness of the soul those inexpressible things. The voice of the Bible is very much, but without this living, efficacious word within the outward word of the gospel will seem but an empty sound. Add to this the witness of St. Augustine, who told us so many rich things because he knew how to listen.

"If the tumult of the flesh is hushed, if the phantasms of the earth, the sea, the air are hushed; if the mind itself is hushed, and passes out of itself by an oblivion of itself, if dreams of the imagination are hushed, and every tongue, and every sign, and all things transitory are altogether hushed; and He alone speaks, so that we hear His word, not by the tongue of the flesh, nor by the voice of an angel; is not this to 'enter into the joy of thy Lord'?"

Let us follow in his path, and so enter the place of hearing for ourselves, if so be that we may hear the word of God for us—that our lives may be voices, and not echoes; that the world may become melodious; and above all that His sweet voice may gather up all the discords of our hearts into its ineffable harmony. If life is dreary, tuneless and forlorn for you, "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord thy God shall say"—in the place of hearing.

SUNDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 12—ADDRESS

1911,

LINCOLN, THE PATRIOT

My Friends—Time alters all things and makes much that is bright in one age dim in after years. Not a few of the great men of former days seem dwarfed to us, not because they were small, but because the people have risen nearer to their level, and they are no longer supreme. Webster would not awe our age as he did his own, nor would Clay dazzle us, though assuredly he would charm us, with his magnetic oratory; while Calhoun would no doubt be regarded as a sincere, able, keenly logical, but quite impossible Bourbon. Able and noble as they were, they belong to the past and can hardly be said to be peculiar

to us. Such men have been seen in other lands, and they will be seen again in ours.

But if Lincoln were to step forth and stand among us, all men would now see, what many did not see while he was living, how supremely great, how unique, how original he was. It is the peculiarity of his fame that he seems to belong to the present and to the future, hardly less than to the past, almost as though he had lived on through the years. With all our advance he would still tower above us, in the loneliness that wrapped him about; for he disclosed, especially during the last two years of his life, a

quality of greatness which not only out-topped the men of his day, but is far beyond us. His vision was prophetic, and he is the leader of his nation today not less than in the days agone.

As John Stuart Mill said, "Lincoln is the kind of a man Carlyle in his better days taught us to worship as a hero." Yet the elements of his nature were so ordinary—his intellect, as Phillips Brooks observed, was so moral, and his morality so intelligent—that when we take them apart they seem so common that some have denied that he was a genius at all but only "a common man expanded to giant proportions," as Joshua Speed described him. But when we put those elements together they make a combination so extraordinary that he baffles us by the very mystery of his simplicity. His ideas are like the sky and the dirt, so large and obvious that men walk under them, and over them, without realizing how great they are. He was absolutely unique in the conditions of his life, but still more in the qualities of his genius, and it will be many a day before we see the like of him again.

So it is that men of other lands point not to Washington, but to Lincoln as our most typical man of state, just as they point to Walt Whitman as our most distinctive man of letters. The possibility, still more the existence, of such a man is held by them to be at once a proof of the validity of our democratic ideals, and a prophecy of our destiny. They find in him not only a character, as Herbert Paul has said, "as noble in its self-forgetfulness, as heroic in its fortitude, as pathetic in its isolation, as homely in its quaint, rugged strength as any in the pages of Plutarch or in the realities of life," but a reason for our faith that our country will be equal to any emergency which may threaten it. For the career of Lincoln shows that when the hour of peril comes a man is there to meet it, and that he may come not from a few leading families, or an educated class, but from the ranks of the common people.

Nor is this to say that so independent, so natural, so strong a man cannot in older nations come to wield so large a power over the affairs and minds of men; but as a fact he has not done so. The only popular leader who seems to challenge comparison is Garibaldi; but, with all his personal magic, his practical resourcefulness, and his absorption in the passion of a national cause, the Italian patriot falls below Lincoln in power of intellect as well as in variety of achievement. Today Lincoln stands as the most effective personality which de-

mocracy has yet produced, testifying in his manhood, not less than in his words and works, that our national faith is not vain.

And now, after many years have come and gone—years of tumult and change called progress—as we see him on the distant slopes of fame he rises up as one of the august figures of history. North and south, and beyond the seas, poets and orators, the nimble weavers of fiction and the grave writers of history, unite in paying him tribute. A fiercer light beats upon such a man than upon any throne, and there remains no more hidden chapters, hardly a disputed passage, in the story of his life. His career, so far as facts go, is as transparent as day, and his personality is vividly outlined—though there will ever remain an inscrutable mystery in the shadows that haunted him. No small part of the charm of his influence is due to what, for lack of a better word, we call his mysticism; some dark impenetrable undercurrent in his soul, deriving we know not whence, but which, without weakening his sympathy or marring his judgment, gave a softening touch to his dealings with men.

Our nation makes a wise profession of ideals by paying honor to Lincoln, for at his best he embodied the genius of our native land, the mighty and tender spirit of America, and its ruling ideas. At his best, I say, he was all this, and more—but not in the beginning. They detract from his greatness, and desecrate his memory, who mar the story of his life by slurring over or apologizing for his earlier, cruder years. We cannot know the height to which he ascended—the dizziest peak to which a mortal may attain while wearing mortality—until we see the depths from which he climbed. He was a man who grew in soul, in breadth and grasp of intellect, in character and spiritual refinement—grew from a backwoods politician to a great statesman—until even his foes saw in him a massive nobility.

Simple, old-fashioned honesty, a delicate sense of justice, a gift of humor, and the instinct of a student, were the traits which he had as a boy in a log-cabin. These we may trace in him as a lad on the farm, as a rail-splitter and boatman down the rivers, as storekeeper, surveyor and soldier, as lawyer and politician, with a certain dignity and purity of nature which revealed, as true refinement always does, the fine grain of the man. While he owed little to books, except to a few of the greatest, and would have gained little, if he had not actually lost, from the best

literary education of his day, his varied experience gave him a wider knowledge of the real life of a people than he could have received in any kind of school. There was no alchemy in his genius, but from the simple chemistry of the common thought rose its clear, steady, living flame. So it was that when the issue of slavery was moving swiftly towards disunion, by a sure instinct the people turned not to an eastern wire-puller, or a statesman of the Harvard law school, but to a man of their own, whom they knew—a man who was ready when a man was wanted.

In a democracy what is needed by the man who is really to serve the people is a well-grounded confidence, in himself, in the people, and the practical capacity to do the thing that needs to be done. This confidence and capacity Lincoln had in rare degree, and the state of society which made it possible for an obscure country lawyer to enter the lists with so renowned an antagonist as Douglas, to win swift recognition of his powers, and to force himself untried to the helm of state, so far from being accidental, are the very essence and hope of the republic. By as much as we alter those conditions—as we are tempted to do, in order to keep out the political quack—by so much do we deny the principles of the father, thwart their purpose, and close the gates to the prophets. For the profound and challenging lesson of the career of Lincoln is that he rose from the people, and its unique glory was that he did not rise away from the people, but that his triumph was by and through them—thus fulfilling in his life what he taught in his words, “that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

Here we come upon the secret of Lincoln as a patriot and a leader—his faith in the people and their right to rule, which no sense of superior powers, or of exalted position, ever for an instant vitiated. No one knew better than he how often the masses are swayed by passion, how easily they are played upon by the arts of a demagogue, and how they are swept away by the gusts of the hour. He knew the moods, whims and caprices of the people, but nonetheless he kept his faith in their ultimate sanity underlying their innumerable insanities. To that sober sanity, cleared of the sediments of excitement, he knew how to appeal as no one else among us ever did—that is, after he came to his maturity, and laid aside the florid bombast of his early eloquence—speaking to the reason and moral sense of men, in behalf of facts, in a

style as direct as a line of light. Let me give an example, which may also illustrate how he would stand upon an issue now rapidly coming before the nation.

One day a man found Lincoln in the White House drinking a cup of tea and asked him, in a half cynical tone, if his faith in the popular judgment was not being shaken by the mad fury then surging up in the house. The president poured his tea from the cup to the saucer, and explained that when things got too warm in the house all that was necessary was to pour the boiling passion into the senate, and let it settle and cool. This parable should be kept in mind by those who seem to be trying to break that saucer, for if they succeed we shall have to drink our political tea sizzling hot, and somebody will be burned. In his quaint and unforgettable way Lincoln thus stated the whole matter just as it is, and this gift of simple wisdom, compact, original and pertinent, gave him a hold upon the popular mind which neither the intrigues of his foes nor the jealousy of his friends could in anywise shake.

So far from giving way to a half cynical fear of the people, he had the utmost trust in their mental judgment upon public affairs—that is, upon the principles involved in public affairs, though of course he did not expect them to be experts in the management of those affairs. “The people,” he said, “are the rightful masters of both congresses and courts, not to overthrow the constitution but to overthrow the men who pervert the constitution,” and his faith in the equal rights of all before the law was not less firm, as when he said: “Certainly the negro is not our equal in color; perhaps not in many other respects; still in the right to put into his mouth the bread that his own hands have earned he is the equal of every other man, white or black.”

And yet this same Lincoln—so radically idealistic in political philosophy—was in practice a realist, even at times an opportunist, and perhaps the most tantalizingly conservative of men. He endorsed the maxim of John Bright—whose picture he kept on the walls of his White House office—that it is the duty of a statesman to endeavor to “make the past slide easily into the future.” Between those who will “let nothing alone” and those who will allow no change at all, he found a middle path of cautious progress. While he had not, so far as we know, read the works of Edmund Burke—though he once tried to read his biography and failed because he found it a mere eulogy—he would have accepted heartily the praise of

Burke for those men in public life who have the "disposition to conserve and the ability to improve." If we do not conserve what we have gained, we cannot improve it. Nor can we really conserve it without constantly improving it. But we must have not only the wish but the ability to improve, else we shall lose what we have while blunderingly trying to get what we want. It was this sane knowledge of the facts of life, and of the human stuff with which a leader has to deal, that made Lincoln so careful and so patient—"a doer, not a mere dreamer, a triumphant champion, not a mere agitator." For him what should be done was always tempered by a clear vision of what could be done, and that was the secret of his fruitful achievement.

Even the most casual student of Lincoln must see how averse he was to the unbalanced and hysterical radicalism of the extremist. The party with but one plank, and the man who stood so close to one idea that he could not see anything else—whether free-soiler, know-nothing, abolitionist or prohibitionist—were equally the butt of his humor, if not of his satire. Such men, he said, were like the peddler who, in trying to sell a pair of pantaloons, described them as being "large enough for any man, and small enough for any boy." As much an enemy of slavery as Wendell Phillips was, he saw, what Phillips did not see, both the complexity of the problem and the practical processes by which alone the great reform could be slowly and safely worked out. Without modifying his oft expressed wish that all men, everywhere, might be free, he declared that he had neither the right nor the inclination to interfere with slavery in the states where it existed, so long as it remained within the limits assigned to it by the fathers of the nation. When it became aggressive, he proposed to restrain and regulate it by law, to push it back into a corner of the nation and let it die of its own rot, working the while to hasten that death by creating an atmosphere of moral sentiment in which it could not breath. And his wisdom, justified by its results in his day, is as sound and true today as it was in the days gone by. Noble as Wendell Phillips was, could he have had his way he would have wrecked the Union without destroying slavery.

Let no one think that this is meant to detract from the honor so justly due to men like Phillips, Garrison, Parker, and the rest of that splendid band. Far from it; though they should not be given credit for what they did not do and could never have done. They were not statesmen, but

agitators who ran far ahead of the people, blowing melodious trumpets of moral revolt, often mistaking their intense feelings for facts, and indulging in brilliant but sometimes unfair denunciation. But the greater man stayed with the people, bore with their anarchy and sluggish steps—seeing all that Phillips and Parker saw, and feeling it not less keenly—and leading the people step by step until they were ready and willing to do what he wanted done. At last both people and leader were ready, and with a heart empty of rancor, free from bitter pettiness, he wrought the work for which we honor him today, and will honor him in days to come.

But those who imagine that Lincoln was a kind of glorified mugwump do not know the man. He was never a bigoted partisan, but always a loyal party man, as any man must be who expects to get anything done under our system of party rule. So true a party man was he, that, despite his own honorable ambitions, and the proddings of an ambitious wife, he more than once sunk his ambition in behalf of his party—as when he stood aside for Baker in 1843 and for Trumbull in 1854—willing to go down if so be that his party might go marching on. While he never seemed to be satisfied with the policy, then in vogue, that "to the victors belong the spoils of office," he did not hesitate to make use of it. He believed in rewarding party workers, and he could hardly be classed as a civil service reformer—so at least one may infer from this note: "I personally wish Jacob Freese appointed colonel of a colored regiment, and this regardless of whether he can tell the exact color of Julius Caesar's hair." And when he put a man in office, though often disappointed he stood by him giving him every chance to do what he was set to do, and was the last to lose faith when he failed.

Yet in time of crisis this ardent party man seized, infallibly, upon the thing that was public-spirited, instead of what was merely partizan, and was willing that his party should meet with a check, or even be destroyed, provided that the country did not perish. In 1864, when the military outlook was dismal and the political prospect forbidding, Lincoln was persuaded that, as he wrote in his secret memorandum, "this administration will not be elected." So he resolved to do everything possible, in the interval between the election and the inauguration of a new president, to save the Union—working in conjunction with McClellan, the opposing presidential candidate, if that could be brought about—because he feared that afterwards the Union could not

be preserved. The end thus proposed might not have been attainable in so short a time, but his prescient contemplation of it, with his utter disregard of partisan lines, reveals what manner of patriot Lincoln was, while illustrating the quality of statesmanship which should always dignify a political crisis. Never did he fail to measure up to a situation, however difficult, desperate, or lofty.

So far other men might and have followed, but in the last year of his life Lincoln displayed a height of soul, a depth of wisdom—at once piteous and practical—never before seen in our history, and which the loftiest men of our day can only imitate afar off. And this was my reason for saying that he still towers above us, despite the advance of years, is still far beyond us, moving in dignity, pathos, and nobility. When Marcus Aurelius had before him, as a prisoner, the man who had instigated revolt against the empire, to the amazement of the Roman senate he forgave him. But Lincoln went further and was not only ready, eager and willing to forgive the men of the south, but to stretch a hand across the graves and grasp the hands of the men who had fought him as enemies, and call them his brothers! No wonder Tolstoi, looking on from afar, said "he was a Christ in miniature."

All his counsel was for kindness,

forgiveness, reconciliation, and renewed faith. When at Libby prison some one declared that Davis ought to be hanged, he said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Men have repeated those words in the pulpit, but only Lincoln could utter them amid the wild and angry passions born of civil war; and not only utter them, but set about, practically and with all the arts of political shrewdness, to cement the Union in that spirit and on that basis. Had he lived the south, not less than the north, would have been saved that awful ordeal of bitterness and revenge following the war. They would have escaped it any way, had the men who staid at home and did the talking been as brave, as generous, and as gentle as the men who went afield and did the fighting.

Long live the name and spirit of Abraham Lincoln! He was simple, genuine, strong, gentle, wise and kind, and by as much as we follow him, by so much and so fast we climb out of the night that covers us into the sunlight. Let us here "highly resolve" to follow no man who has not a like spirit, so that when men talk of the land where men are the freest, the tallest of soul, the most heroic and the most gentle—giving all men room to stretch their arms to grasp opportunity, and their soul to lay hold of the truths that make men free—they will mean the land where Lincoln lived, and where he still lives.

SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 19—SERMON

WASHINGTON

"Our fathers trusted in Thee."
Psalm 22:4.

As religion must have its saints, so patriotism must have its heroes. Society is not moved simply by its abstract truths, however noble, but also by its attachments, its enthusiasms, and its ideals. Because our republic is not merely a corporation, but a passion, a sentiment, a vast friendship, it keeps the birthdays of its great men and revisits the scenes of their mighty deeds. Love of country, like love of God, is renewed by the examples of great men who embodied in concrete and fascinating shape what might else become vague, dreamy and intangible, if not unreal. Their homes are shrines where men who despair of the present may rekindle their national faith and patriotic hope.

When the frenzy of conflict has died away, and the fascination of false issues has been dispelled by time, it is the character of our noble men which

enshrines the holiest traditions of our civilization. In spite of all that has been said against it, some of us still believe, with Carlyle, in the big man theory of history—that the story of the race is best told and studied as a series of biographies. We of this land need go no further than the Father of our country for an example of that truth. The revolution was the work of the people, but Washington so incarnated its spirit, its struggle, and its purpose that it almost seems to have been the work of one man. He it was who carried its mighty burden. Atlas-like, upon his shoulders. Had he fallen in battle, or been captured by the enemy, so far as human insight can see the revolution would have failed. If the ways of God could have been thwarted by hotspurs and madcaps in the field, or by bickerings and intrigues in congress, this republic would never have seen the light. It was the giant-like strength, the granite-like endurance of Wash-

ington, that saved the day and the nation.

What a pity, then, that this noble and lovable man should have faded, as he seems well nigh to have done, into a mere statue in the hall of history. We look at the picture of Washington and see a great face indeed, but more like the Sphinx than a man, from which almost every flush of human life has vanished. We do not feel the heart-beat of the man as we do of Lincoln, and those nearer to us. No doubt a like fate would have befallen Lincoln had not Herndon borne the abuse of myth-makers, and refused to permit a great human figure to be turned into a stiff and colorless image. But Washington fell into the hands of Parson Weems who, with his little hatchet, made a hero into a prig, while the Stuart portrait ironed every human wrinkle out of his face. As a result, we see him half hidden in a cloud of commonplaces, and pay him but a perfunctory respect.

Yet a word may be said on the other side. It requires some exercise of the imagination to call up the men of the past and make them live before our minds, and not every one is gifted with that power of resurrection. Our historical fiction, when it is true to the facts, may help us; but too often, when it is not a mere panegyric, it feels itself commissioned to be iconoclastic. As between the eulogist and the dealer in barn-yard biography and back-stairs gossip, there is little to choose. Changes in manners and customs make it difficult to recall the men of other days. Those knee-breeches and powdered wigs, those shoe-buckles and ruffled shirts work a spell so peculiar that we feel that the men who wore them belonged to another race. They were in fact English gentlemen in "blue and buff", even if Ben Franklin did wear woolen hose. The stately Miltonian diction in which they conversed was so unlike the more familiar speech of our day, that we seem to live in a different land—a love letter of that time reads like a passage from an oration by Edmund Burke. When we translate the letters of Washington and Lafayette into simple language, they are full of friendship and tender humanity, with glints of fun, but they must be translated before we can see their beauty.

But when we go behind these differences of custom and speech we find very real folk, less remote and less difficult to know. Augustine Washington was twice married, and to him by his second venture—as he styles Mary Ball in his will—was born George, February 22nd, 1732. Myths are many and facts are few, but there

seems to have been little that was unusual in the boy and his doings. If he played war it was not a portent of his future, but an imitation of his half-brother Lawrence making ready for real war with the redskins. When the boy was eleven, his father died, leaving most of the estate to the sons of his first wife, which meant that Mary Washington and her sons felt the pinch of poverty. She was an admirable, if not intellectual woman, but in after years her mood changed, and her feeling as to money matters caused her son pain. His letters to her, beginning "Honored Madam," after the manner of the time, show the struggle between the annoyance of a man and the respect of a son. Not a few of their paragraphs make distressing reading, and we turn away.

As a result, Washington did not finish his education, and had to forego the study of literature and confine himself to a business training—though he afterwards read widely, as we see from the allusions in his letters, especially those of Lafayette. This made him a studious lad, solitary with tasks indoors while other lads were at play, but it is worthy of note that they brought their disputes to him to be settled. But this also made him a careful, methodical, painstaking, accurate lad, and the habit followed him to the end—while the girls complained that he was bashful, and had no small talk. He knew that the burden of the family would rest upon him in the near future, and he was preparing for it. His copy-books reveal his diligence not only at his lessons, but in the study of those famous one hundred and ten "Rules of Civility"—a manual of conduct brought to this country, it seems, by James Marye, a man who had studied to be a priest but turned Huguenot—which entered like leaven into the nature of the lad, giving his native dignity an added grace, while restraining a fiery temper. To doubt this copy-book discipline worked ill as well as good—as one may imagine after reading "Richard Feverel," by George Meredith—and a weaker lad might have been ruined by it. Others who endured the same ordeal were made models equally of courtesy, and incompetence. But perhaps we should attribute only the urbanity to the rules, and the incompetence to something else, for some of them were good and wise and as useful now as then.

At the age of fourteen Washington wished to enter the navy, but was kept from doing so by his mother, for which she gave him a fine pen-knife—which is now among the relics of the old Masonic lodge of

which he was, afterwards, an honored member. So he studied surveying—a fact to be noted, as in the story of Lincoln — while writing love lyrics to the girls, none of whom seemed to be fond of his attentions. Though somewhat of a dandy in dress, of fine figure and presence, the fair sex were afraid of him, perhaps because of his grave spirit, rendered graver by necessity—and some have suggested, because of his nose which beaked hugely out from his face, and which his friends hoped he would grow up to. At any rate, his various and sundry romantic adventures left him baffled but not less persistent, until at last he met Martha Curtis, a widow who understood. But by that time his ample nature had filled out to the proportions of a man, such as is rarely seen—six feet three inches tall, lithe, sinewy, and firmly built, crowned with rich brown hair, his eyes blue gray, not flashing but steady—a born leader of men.

Such was the youth who fell in with Lord Fairfax—whose estate adjoined Mount Vernon—while surveying or fox hunting, and the nobleman admired him both at work and at play. So he made young George surveyor of his great back lands, and the happy lad mounted his horse and rode forth to his career, learning how to endure hardness. So accurate were his surveys that to this day they stand unquestioned, wherever found. He became a woodsman, a pathfinder, and judge of wild country and of wild human nature, learning the alphabet of Trenton and Valley Forge but remaining always a dandy, even in an Indian hunting shirt. At twenty he was adjutant-general of his district, and at twenty-two the governor of Virginia chose him to go to the agitated frontier upon a mission of peace among the French, the Indians, and the restless colonists. When he returned, all Virginia knew that she had found a man, and when the conflict came he was placed at the head of the colonial troops. He felt keenly the dull superciliousness of the king's officer under whom he served, as his letter to Governor Dinwiddie attests; but that was only a part of his course of training for the task which fate had set before him.

How to endure public disfavor was a lesson that Washington, with his fiery nature, never did learn. Not knowing French, he had to use interpreters during the Great Meadows campaign, with a number of crooked results which left a cloud upon his name for a time. Yet, when it was sifted, he came out of it all so honorable and clear that he received a vote of public thanks. But it made

him ill, and he went indignant to Mount Vernon—now become his own—suffering the “loss of health” he speaks of. But it was not for long. Soon, in spite of his mother, he was off for the French and Indian wars, again to suffer the insults of British officers and the shame of defeat with Braddock. Before the end Braddock came down off his high horse and learned to respect his young Virginia aide, but it was too late. Oddly enough, when he insisted that his men have good horses and keep sober, he was set upon by a mongrel, heel-snapping breed of newspapers, and only the peril of the times prevented his resigning his position. Excellent things to become inured to, else later, when everything seemed to depend on him alone, he would have been in poor plight—for no man in this land, not even Lincoln, was ever so abused by the press. But when his first war was over—when Montcalm and Wolfe had fallen—upon his entrance into the House of Burgesses he received such a welcome that he was overcome. He rose, tried to reply, blushed, and sat down. Nor has there ever been a more perfect tribute in fewer words than that by the speaker of the house:

“Sit down, Mr. Washington, your modesty is equal to your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language that I possess.” No wonder that tribute has come down as a classic alike of tact and truth, for never were truer words uttered.

There followed a period of peace and quiet, which Washington enjoyed with his young wife at Mount Vernon. His marriage left him childless, but that need not be a regret, since the children of great men more often grow like weeds about the feet of their fathers. Meanwhile, the children of his wife, with not a few poor relations on both sides, often tried his patience and drained his purse. He loved Mount Vernon, and was never so happy as when he could ride over his estate and direct his affairs, with his usual method and care. He dearly loved to dance, even in old age, and he knew the arts of hospitality, glimpses of which have floated down to us in the letters and memoirs of those who enjoyed his fireside. Though not a story-teller like Lincoln, he had a robust sense of fun and loved to hear others tell them. He rarely attended church when living at Mount Vernon, and in middle life gave up taking communion, though as president he went regularly to church. Without being the ideal churchman which some describe him, or the unbeliever which others make him out, he was religious in his own stately and quiet way. This pause of

six years, between wars, was no doubt the happiest time of his life. If he entered it a large man, he came out of it a great man, ready for the difficult work that awaited him.

Perhaps it is not correct to speak of Washington as a great genius, though his intellect is more highly honored abroad than at home. No separate faculty, or federation of faculties stood out in him and reign in that weird and strange splendor which amazes us in Alexander and dazzles us in Napoleon. His genius, if we may call it such, like that of Alfred, was moral, and his greatness lay in the noble symmetry of useful, reliable, unpyrotechnic powers. There was in him a certain stateliness of soul, a majesty of character, more precious and more useful than the dazzling gifts of other men. With a poorly armed, ill-clad army he performed rare feats of strategy and victory, as masterful in retreat as he was merciful in triumph. It was more than luck that turned the tide at Monmouth, and that swooped down upon Trenton and Princeton with a thousand men at the lowest ebb of the revolution, reviving the hopes of his cause. It was more than mere tact that enabled him to hold the loyalty of the French armies, among whose gay uniforms his own ragged continentals looked like crows among birds of paradise, and lead both to victory. Frederick the Great said that the Trenton campaign was the most brilliant of the century, and it was the century of himself and Marlborough. All that we can say is that, if Washington was not a genius, he was something better—a man who picked his way amid the intrigues of friends, the treacheries of foes, furious passions and wild perils, and led his people to victory, peace, and honor. He was like Moses—a mountain man against whom the storms beat in vain.

But to build a state was a greater task than to lead a revolution, and

here Washington was the master spirit. He gave his voice for a powerful union, while others temporized with shifting prejudice and sectional animosities. Others, like Adams and Henry, doubted, but he was sure. The people did not trust Jefferson, much as they loved and admired him. They rarely trust the subtle, facile, brilliant man. On the other hand, Hamilton did not trust the people. He felt that to be ruled by the majority is to be ruled by ignorance, which is self-evident so long as the majority is ignorant. Had it not been for Washington, who stood above all parties, our republic would have fallen between those partisan tools. He alone towered above Hamilton and Jefferson, having the greatness of both without the faults of either—or, to be more accurate, he had a quality of greatness unlike either, and which commanded the homage of all. So that Hamilton could say, to one who distrusted the constitution because it was a compromise, "Fear is folly since George Washington is to be president."

It behooves us to keep the name and image and spirit of Washington alive in the grateful and reverent memory of this republic. Let us tell his story, with all its vivid human color, to our children and to the strangers within our gates. True patriotism may sometimes despair of democratic institutions, but so long as our soil grows men, who, like Washington and Lincoln, are proof to place and gold, and show through all their varied life "a manhood neither bought nor sold," so long our fears can serve no other purpose than to keep the signal fires of vigilance aglow along the heights of liberty. Webster said truly,

"We cannot wish better for our country nor for the world than that the same spirit which influenced Washington may influence all who succeed him."